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2d guerrilla boat seized by Israelis

By Jonathan Broder
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JERUSALEM—An Israeli naval patrol seized a yacht off the coast of southern Lebanon carrying Palestinian guerrillas and two Westerners serving as crew members, the military high command says.

The yacht was seized on Saturday after it "acted suspiciously," ignored an Israeli order to halt and tried to escape, the military spokesman said Sunday.

Interrogation of the Palestinian guerrillas on board disclosed that the yacht, named the Gandha, had set sail from Larnaca, Cyprus, and was on its way to the southern Lebanese port of Sidon, the spokesman said. He said the Palestinians admitted they were planning a terrorist attack against targets in Israel.

The military said that a Greek and a Briton on the Gandha were detained.

It was the second time in a week that Israeli naval patrols seized private yachts off the southern Lebanese coast carrying Palestinians who were said to be on their

way to terrorist missions inside Israel.

Last Saturday, the navy intercepted another yacht from Cyprus with an undisclosed number of Algerian-trained Palestinians, along with an unidentified American and an Australian serving as crew members, the spokesman said.

The military spokesman identified the Palestinians captured in the latest incident as members of the Jordanian-based Force 17 of Fatah, the largest group in the Palestine Liberation Organization, headed by Yasser Arafat. The spokesman gave no further details of the unit, but Israel state television said Arafat's personal bodyguard were Force 17 members.

The yacht was captured as military sources expressed concern over further Palestinian guerrilla attempts to infiltrate Israel by sea. The sources, with close ties to the intelligence establishment, said the guerrillas viewed Israel's sea coast as its weak spot.

Israel has stepped up naval patrols off its own waters, as well as the seas off the Lebanese coast.